

**Remarks Before
The Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on Wellness and Human Rights
On the Ongoing Tragedy of International Slavery
and Human Trafficking**

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U.S. Department of State
Wednesday, October 29, 2003**

Mr. Chairman and other Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to personally discuss with you the efforts of the Department of State in combating trafficking in persons. All of us are keenly aware of the horrific experiences of the 800,000 to 900,000 women, children and men who are trafficked across international borders every year. These numbers do not include victims who are trafficked within their own countries. We now estimate that this modern-day slavery also includes 18,000 to 20,000 victims who enter the United States annually. This problem of modern-day slavery is of such importance to the Administration that President Bush brought it to the attention of the world's leaders in his speech at a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2003.

My office was specifically created by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to monitor and lead the United States' effort to combat transnational trafficking in persons. We are charged with the responsibility of assisting the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in its efforts to coordinate the Federal government's domestic and overseas anti-trafficking efforts and of assessing other governments' efforts to combat trafficking. The Secretary of State's annual Trafficking in Persons report shows steady progress in the fight against trafficking, which is a tribute not only to the efforts of the world's governments, but to the legislation that Congress passed, providing for the possibility of sanctions and loss of some U.S. aid for countries that do not make significant anti-trafficking efforts.

In June 2003, Secretary Powell released the third annual Trafficking in Persons Report. It was a particularly significant report because for the first time, governments that were not making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with the Act's minimum standards could face consequences that include the loss of non-humanitarian, non-trade related assistance. I want to assure the Committee that the Department views the imposition of penalties on other countries as a very serious matter and that my staff conducted extensive research into the anti-trafficking activities of other governments. Our embassies submitted serious and detailed reports, and international and non-governmental organizations continued to share with us their experiences and understanding of trafficking developments around the world. I am pleased that our third annual report was what I consider to be the most comprehensive report on the effort of

governments worldwide to combat what the Act defines as “severe forms of trafficking in persons.”

I want to spend a little time discussing the report because its consequences can have an enormous impact on our bilateral relationships. Every year, our report has become more and more comprehensive. Our initial report in 2001 included fewer than 70 countries. As the Department expanded its research and reporting on this issue, we expanded to 89 countries in the 2002 report. A total of 116 countries are in the latest annual report. The June 2003 report found that governments of 26 countries fully complied with the Act’s minimum standards and were placed on tier 1. We determined that 75 countries had governments that did not fully comply with the Act’s minimum standards but were making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance. These countries were placed on tier 2. There were 15 countries in the June report whose governments did not fully comply with the minimum standards and were not making significant efforts to do so. These 15 countries fell into tier 3. Ten of these countries were subsequently moved into Tier 2 for reasons I will describe below.

There were many actions governments took to fight trafficking and, as noted in our report, they did not have to be expensive or elaborate. For instance, the Royal Government of Nepal employs former victims to work alongside border guards to identify traffickers and victims. In Andhra Pradesh, India, a law enforcement officer’s performance rating is linked to his or her effort to investigate and apprehend human traffickers. The burden is on the governments to demonstrate that they are making significant efforts to fight trafficking in spite of their economic or other possible limitations.

As I stated earlier, governments in tier 3 are potentially subject to certain consequences including the withholding of non-humanitarian, non-trade related assistance. Tier 3 governments not receiving such assistance may be subject to the withholding of funding for participation of their officials in cultural or educational exchange programs. The United States may also be directed to oppose assistance for Tier 3 countries through the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and other multilateral development banks.

The President can waive the assistance-related consequences, totally or in part, based on a determination that the provision of the assistance would promote the purposes of the Act or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States. This waiver authority must be exercised when necessary to avoid significant adverse effects on vulnerable populations, including women and children. The sanctions would also not apply if the Department found that before October 1, 2003, a government took steps that effectively moved it out of tier 3, that is, it came into compliance with the minimum standards or is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance.

Between June and September, my staff worked actively with several of our embassies to outline the steps that we believed a country could and should take. Our goal was to aggressively utilize this period of heightened attention and threat of sanctions to galvanize real action to fight trafficking that translates into lives saved and victims

rescued. These steps would also demonstrate that a country was making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards and not subject them to the consequences. In the end, it was not the imposition of sanctions that we sought but the recognition by governments that they must address the problem of trafficking in persons seriously, that they must develop strategies and programs to fight it effectively, and they must rescue the victims. Our goal was not the imposition of sanctions, but a recognition by governments that they must address the problem of trafficking in persons seriously, that they must develop strategies and programs to fight it effectively, that they must rescue the victims, and, most importantly, that they must take action.

Our efforts to bring more countries into compliance with the requirements of the Act were largely successful. On September 10, 2003 the President notified Congress that ten governments had taken significant steps to fight trafficking in persons. In recognition of these efforts, these countries were moved to Tier 2 and thus avoided possible sanctions under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. These governments -- Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Greece, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Suriname, Turkey, and Uzbekistan -- deserve recognition for their quick action to address problems that were noted in the Department's June 2003 Trafficking in Persons Report.

Steps taken by these ten governments demonstrate that the Administration's intervention on this issue is spurring the international community to action and, most importantly, is yielding results. In many key areas these governments made significant progress in drafting or passing new anti-trafficking legislation and procedures; conducting high-profile public awareness campaigns on national press and television; developing new anti-trafficking training programs for police, immigration and judicial officials; creating national task forces and action plans; establishing confidential hotlines to fight corruption and trafficking in persons; and building referral systems for victims. These important actions will punish the perpetrators and help the victims of this heinous crime around the world.

The steps taken by these countries stand in contrast to the continuing failure of Burma, Cuba, North Korea, Liberia and Sudan to make significant efforts to comply with the Act's minimum standards. As a result, the President decided to impose sanctions on these countries in accordance with the Act. While Liberia and Sudan have also failed to meet the standards of the Act, and are thus subject to sanctions, the President has determined that certain multilateral assistance for these two countries would promote the purposes of the Act or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States. For Sudan, the assistance will be limited to that which may be necessary to implement a peace accord.

I would like to emphasize that the Administration's efforts to fight trafficking in persons are not confined to this annual report. In February, we convened 400 people from the United States and abroad who were active participants in the fight against sex trafficking. Congressmen Frank Wolf and Chris Smith addressed the delegates who came from all strata of society and represented an enormous range of anti-trafficking experiences. The conference brought together many groups and individuals who had no knowledge of each other but who now seek to work together to combat trafficking. Conference

recommendations have been posted on the Internet in English, Chinese, Hindi, Russian, French, Spanish and Arabic.

The Administration also provides funds to support overseas programs designed to fight trafficking. In fiscal years 2001 and 2002, the United States federal agencies spent approximately \$100 million on programs to improve the protection of victims, prosecution of traffickers and prevention of future trafficking activities. At another level, I convene quarterly meetings of a multi-agency group that assists the Interagency Task Force coordinate the anti-trafficking strategies and efficiently fund programs involved in this fight against traffickers. The Secretary, senior officials in the State Department and our ambassadors throughout the world are keeping this issue on our bilateral agendas, raising awareness, and calling for action. Senior officials from the regional bureaus also raise this issue in their bilateral meetings here in Washington and in their travels abroad. Through our outreach efforts here and abroad, we are raising awareness about this issue so that everyone who learns of the problem can be part of the solution. My staff has traveled to scores of countries to meet with foreign government officials, non-governmental representatives and others who are joining the fight. We have participated in multi-lateral meetings in Europe and Asia. I recently traveled to Russia, The Netherlands, Sweden, Greece, Thailand and India to meet with victims, NGOs, international organizations, government officials and embassy staff to experience first-hand the complexities of this issue and the hardships of the victims we work to rescue.

There is much being done to fight trafficking and clearly much more needs to be done. This Administration is committed to abolishing trafficking in persons. In addition to the State Department efforts and those of other agencies, the President, during his speech to the General Assembly in September, announced an additional \$50 million to rehabilitate women and children who are victims of sex trafficking.

I am pleased to report that this fight truly engages the Department's energy and imagination and we appreciate the unswerving support we have received from the Congress. I will close my remarks at this point and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.